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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000046

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TAGS: [KPKO](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [ET](#)  
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN DEPLOYMENT PLANS FOR DARFUR

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary:

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11. (C) Defense Minister Kuma Demeksa and Chief of Military Staff, General Samora Yonus reiterated to Ambassador messages from the Ethiopian Military (ENDF) to the Embassy Defense Attache's office that as many as 1,500 Ethiopian troops will be prepared to deploy to Darfur within 15 days, but requested equipment is needed to support the deployment. At the end of November, ENDF officials requested kevlar body armor and night vision goggles from the United States. Additional required equipment includes attack helicopters, GPS units, compasses, tents and other types of equipment. Major General Yohannes Gebremeskal is in New York to discuss with the United Nations Ethiopia's deployment. Prime Minister Meles said that Ethiopia is prepared to dispatch 5,000 troops, but that the UN has limited the number to 1,500. Ethiopia plans to deploy five battalions rotating through Darfur as well as three extra companies for logistics, reconnaissance and heavy transport. A three member State Department ACOTA team will arrive in Addis Ababa soon to provide basic pre-deployment training. General Samora complained to the Ambassador that the U.S. has not come through on promises and did not want U.S. expressions of support. He wanted to see real hardware and financial support in support of his troops. End Summary.

DARFUR DEPLOYMENT: MORE WORK NEEDED

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12. (C) During a round of discussions January 3 and 4, Defense Minister Kuma Demeksa and ENDF Chief of Staff General Samora told Ambassador and accompanying PolCounselor, ORA Chief and DATT that 1,500 Ethiopian troops would be prepared to be deployed to Darfur within 15 days. In November, the ENDF requested that the USG provide night vision goggles and Kevlar vests. The Minister urged the receipt of the materials prior to deployment. General Samora, speaking in general terms, told the Ambassador pointedly that the ENDF was extremely disappointed with the U.S. for not meeting promises and merely expressing support without providing hardware and financial support. Ethiopia was carrying the burden alone in Somalia and in other areas, including PKO operations. While the Ambassador noted increase in U.S. IMET and FMF assistance as well as meeting, albeit seven years of neglect, C-130 spare parts deliveries and commitment to meet their request for Kevlar vests and NVG, the General was clearly frustrated and not listening.

13. (C) In addition to Kevlar and NVG, the only items requested of the U.S. by the ENDF include GPS, compasses, signal pistols, demining clothes, tents, binoculars, berets, and most likely attack helicopters. Major General Yohannes, who is in charge of the deployment, is in New York to discuss with the United Nations Ethiopia's deployment plans. Upon his return we should have a greater sense of what is required. A three member State Department ACOTA training team will arrive in Ethiopia next week to help with pre-deployment training of the ENDF.

#### ETHIOPIA'S DEPLOYMENT MAKE-UP

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14. (C) The ENDF informs us that it plans to have five battalions ready to support Darfur operations (5,000 troops). The battalions will rotate through Darfur with one battalion on station at any one time. In addition, the ENDF will provide three extra companies for logistics, reconnaissance and heavy transport. The breakdown for Darfur operations follows:

- One motorized battalion of 860 troops
- One reconnaissance company of 160 troops
- One multi-role logistics company of 300 troops
- One medium size heavy transport company of 125 troops

15. (C) From initial discussions, the Ethiopians hope to deploy about 600 troops in the near future with the remainder deployed before summer. By then, the ENDF hopes to have their units fully operational in Darfur. Prime Minister Meles has told us, and it was confirmed by the Defense Minister, that Ethiopia is prepared to send as many as 5,000

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troops but will limit its deployment to 1,500 for now in response to UN/AU request.

#### BASIS FOR COMMITMENT

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16. (C) Prime Minister Meles has consistently made it clear to us and others that peace in Sudan is of strategic importance to Ethiopia. With an eye towards the spring 2009 Sudanese elections, Meles has remarked to us in private, and the Foreign Minister in public during the Secretary's visit last month, that implementation of the CPA is critical to resolving not only the north-south impasse but also Darfur. The Prime Minister has been speaking with President Bashir on a regular basis while Foreign Minister Seyoum and State Minister Tekeda have been the point people on working with the Government of Southern Sudan. The importance of Ethiopia to Sudan was underscored during the visit of Vice President Salva Kiir in late-December who pressed Meles on a more active high profile facilitation effort between Bashir and Salva Kiir's SPLM.

#### COMMENT

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17. (C) Ethiopia's operations tempo is extremely high and fast paced. It currently has over 5,000 troops in Somalia, troops in its Ogaden region, over 100,000 troops committed to the Eritrean border, and troops and advisors in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire peacekeeping operations. The Darfur operations are of critical interest to the Ethiopians and they are fully committed to the operations. While Prime Minister Meles is very thankful for U.S. support to Ethiopia, meeting our commitment quickly on the provision of Kevlar vests and NVG will help us ease the often tense relations with General Samora, whose hard-nosed and direct approach with all interlocutors underscores his bottom line demands for immediate support and assistance and not promises of future support. End Comment.  
YAMAMOTO